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THE
GLORIES OF HEAVEN,
OR THE
FELICITY OF THE SAINTS,
IN THE
CITY OF GOD:

Shewing that it principally consists in a perpetual increase of Knowledge, which the glorified Saints shall everlastingly possess in *Paradise*.

Glorious Things are spoken of thee O City of God! Pal. 87, 3.

DONE FROM THE FRENCH,
By MILES MARTINDALE.

O ye blest Realms of permanent Delight,
Full above Measure, lasting beyond Bounds,
A Perpetuity of Bliss is Bliss!

YOUNG.

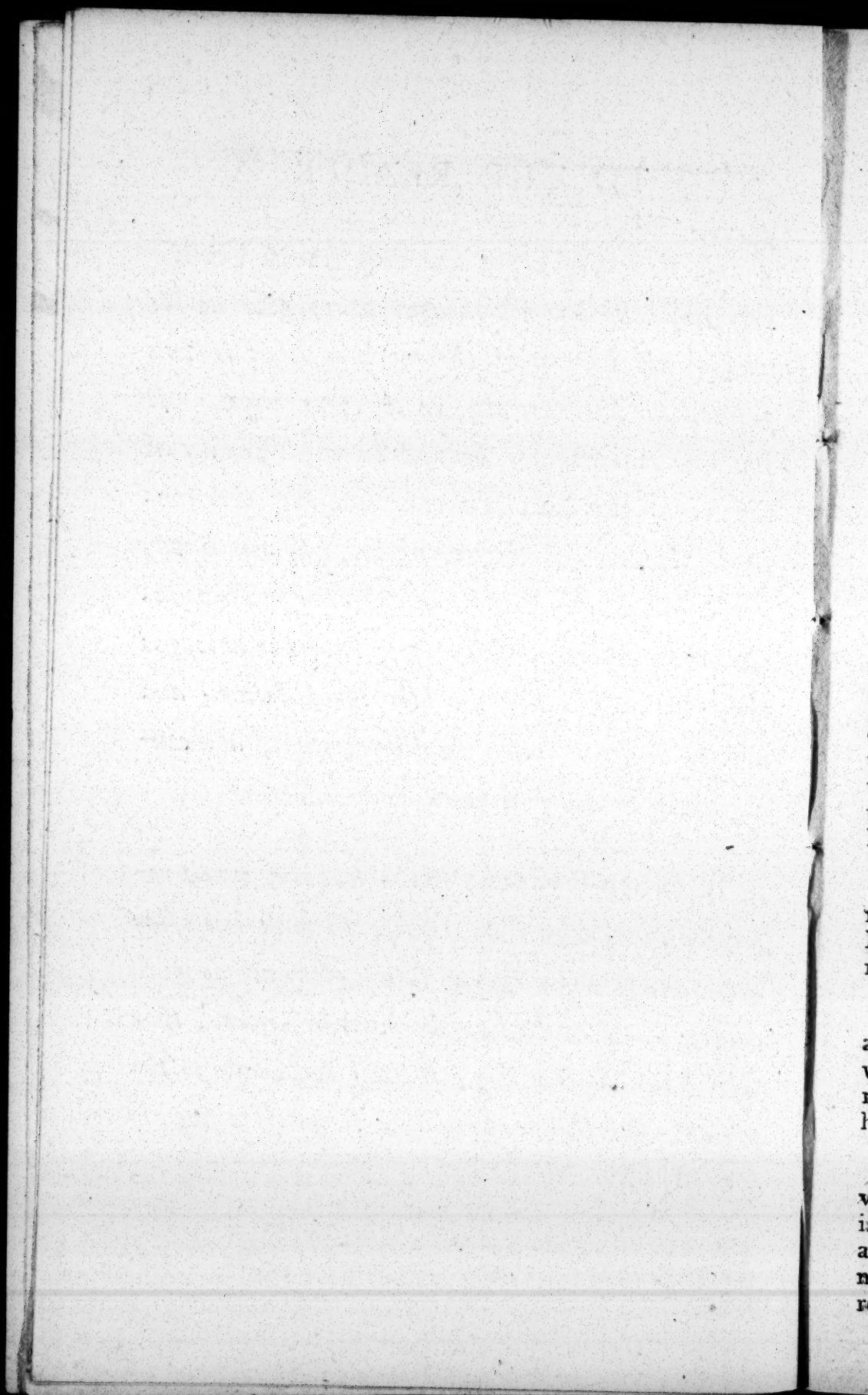
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TO THE READER.

THE following pages are done from a French Divine, who has not thought fit to give us his name; all I know of the work is, that it was printed at Amsterdam, in the year 1700. It contains two parts; the first on the Felicity of Saints, in the Life to come: and the other contains Maxims of Piety, as helps to our happy arrival in that blessed place. I have not translated his reflections at full length, but have abridged them, because I thought him too diffusive; and also to bring it into a smaller compass, and consequently to a less Price.

CANDID READER, if thy soul is as much refreshed in reading this treatise as mine has often been, and if thy views of future glory are as much enlarged and exalted as the Author's were, thou wilt have cause of joy; it will contribute to thy present and future Felicity; so prays thine in Christ, M. M.



THE GLORIES OF HEAVEN.

I Would not be thought to speak with a decisive tone on the subject in hand; for although all men agree in the certainty of a future state, which appears both from the light of nature and revelation, nevertheless the particulars of that state are very obscure, and of which we know but little.

To speak with assurance on a subject so dark, I must needs have a much better opinion of myself than I have. Modesty and reserve on a subject so sublime will be more becoming than assuming confidence.

If in the course of this subject, any thing too bold or affirmative should escape my pen, I hope the reader will make some abatement, and consider it rather as a mode of speech, which I would not have used, could I have found a better.

For although I may be fully persuaded of the truth of what I advance, yet I cannot say that it is certain. It is not improbable but I may be mistaken, I am a man and have no privileges above others, which can exempt me from errors with which human nature is surrounded.

In my judgment it is necessary for us, as far as we can, to form positive ideas, particular and determinate on the nature of future felicity; provided that such ideas are not repugnant to divine revelation.

A cloud of general ideas strike but little in comparison to clear and circumstantial descriptions. To say that the life to come is grand and full of glory; that such as God shall account worthy to behold his face, shall share the same glory with Jesus in the bosom of the Father; is to advance very great things, and so great that they must needs fill us with admiration.

But the mind of man is so constituted, that grand subjects astonish and afright to a certain degree, instead of producing joy and pleasure. There are objects too vast for our senses; our eye cannot sustain the sun's meridian blaze. There are sounds too strong for our ear. There are objects too vast for our minds, which when presented rather produce surprize than pleasure.

The principles of the christian religion are contained in a few propositions, an abridgment of which we call the Apostles creed; yet we know that it will require volumes to explain and enlarge on those great truths, and that it is needful to unfold them in order to give them energy and force on the minds of men.

One may then reasonably hope, that an explication of the future blessedness will meet with a favourable reception among the thinking and pious part of mankind. The passages of Scripture which speak of that bliss are for the most part too sublime for our comprehension, and in order to understand and feel, we must divide and explain them.

All christians in general unanimously agree that the felicity of the saints in heaven will be exceeding great; although they think differently on other subjects. All acknowledge a life to come, which the Bible calls the *the Kingdom of heaven*. All agree that the life to come will be perfectly happy and glorious, and that there is
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nothing in this world to which it can be compared ; that all terrene grandeur is as much beneath the glory of heaven as darkness is below the blaze of light, or the meridian glory of the sun.

It is agreed that a great part of our future blifs will consist in the greatness of our knowledge and in the enlargement of our understandings ; the most knowing in this world, know but a few things ; the greatest connoisseurs and most profound philosophers, are blind and ignorant ; they see things darkly, and with much imperfection. Their wisdom is circumscribed, their faculties are weak, it is with much application, and difficulty that they conceive and comprehend the little they have attained : but in the other world their wisdom shall be exceeding great, and their faculties very strong, their knowledge increased infinitely above what we can imagine.

The knowledge of God is the most excellent of all knowledge ; God of all objects is the most glorious, and consequently to know him is the supreme of all science. One estimates the price of science by the merit of its object ; when one is grand and excellent, the other must be so too ; when one is uninteresting, the other is of small esteem. And from hence it is, that in this world the knowledge of God is superior to all other knowledge.

Whatever contributes to the happiness of man, must correspond with his faculties. There must be a conformity between the subject and the object, otherwise man could not be happy. Light, beauty and proportion are pleasing to the eyes ; the harmonious sounds of music to the ears ; and perfumes and fragrant odours to the smell ; the reason is, these agree with the faculties of human nature, and there is a certain proportion between the subjects and the objects.

Man is endowed with a reasonable soul, and the knowledge of things is very agreeable to him. Music would no longer please the ear, nor beauty and proportion

tion the eye, but for the knowledge of the human mind. The pleasures of contemplation, and the charms of science are infinitely more transporting than all the pleasures of sense, how exquisite or perfect soever they may be. The pleasures of the sensualists and voluptuaries are low and brutal, but those of the wise and holy are elevated, sublime, and angelic.

True science not only pleases the reasonable soul, but tends to its purity and perfection. The more knowing a man is, the more his soul is enlarged and enobled; and on the contrary, the more ignorant, the more low and sensual.

There is not any thing that produces more pleasure to the mind, nor tends so much to its refinement as the knowledge of God; this gives a tranquil joy and satisfaction beyond description. This knowledge calms the turbulent passions, satisfies the desires; she leads them to the summit of perfection, and leaves not one wish ungratified. The knowledge of God and the grand effects which follow, is the greatest perfection to which we can arrive, or even possess; nor are we capable of enjoying any thing higher either in this or the world to come.

We have no other knowledge of God in this world than what we derive from his works, his word, and his spirit. All that we know of God, is either by the contemplation of his works, or reading his blessed word assisted by his grace. The effects of his power, of his wisdom, and of his bounty, which we behold in his word and his works, lead us to the knowledge of his glorious perfections, and the ideas we have of him and the future state are formed by the same.

It seems probable we shall know God in the other world, in the same manner which we know him in this. God is immutable, there is with him no *variableness* nor *shadow of turning*. His nature, his attributes, and his perfections suffer no change. He is what he was, and shall be eternally.

Our faculties in the other world shall be such as they are in this. I grant they will receive by degrees new enlargements and perfections, and immediately on our admission into heaven, we shall experience a vast increase. But this advantage will not change the nature of our souls. If their natures were changed, we should cease to be men, and then it would follow, that though one kind of creatures had obeyed or disobeyed the laws of God, yet another species was saved or condemned; which appears to me totally inadmissible. Should the Almighty clothe the soul with new faculties after its separation from the body, is what I cannot deny the possibility of, but I cannot say it will be so, all I contend for is, that the nature of our souls shall not be destroyed.

If God is the same in the other world as in this, which is most certain, and that the essential faculties of our souls will be the same, then the blessed will know God by his works, and by new revelations which he will make to us himself in heaven.

I cannot say what use the great and glorious objects in heaven will be of, unless to give us brighter discoveries of the perfections of God. To what purpose will be the pomp, magnificence, glory, and splendor of the house of God, if by these we can discover nothing of his nature, his admirable attributes and perfections? This is one great end of all the things of this world, and I conceive they will serve the same noble purpose in that to come.

I would not affirm that God makes use of second causes for the preservation of our being, yet it is not improbable, but grant this, one cannot with reason imagine that this is their sole use here, and I think it will not be their sole use in heaven. *The heavens declare the glory of God:* to what must serve the beings which they contain, and with which they are surrounded? I doubt not but the heaven of heavens and all their illustrious objects are for the same grand purpose.

I maintain that all the objects of the other world will contribute to the felicity of the saints; but I conceive

that will be in making us know the excellence and perfection of God, and the incomprehensible riches of his bounty, his love, and his grace. God is the great object of the felicity of man, it is in his knowledge and the fruits and effects which follow that our sovereign good consisteth. The creatures cannot contribute to our beatitude, but as they reveal to us the excellence of God, and enable us to comprehend and know him better.

I acknowledge that some divines maintain; that in the other world we shall have an immediate knowledge of the essence and perfections of God; but I am not satisfied with the proofs they bring; and many, not to say the greatest part of protestants are of another mind; and have offered many and weighty reasons to the contrary.

But though they agree that the felicity of saints will chiefly consist in the knowledge of God, they nevertheless doubt whether this knowledge will be received by a perpetual progress, or whether it will be sudden, and be presented to the eyes of our mind, as light is presented to the eyes of our body.

I am inclined to believe that this knowledge shall be progressive; the saints after many ages passed in the house of God, will know God better than they did the first moment of their introduction to glory. I do not think that millions of ages of which eternity is composed, pardon me the expression, will put a stop to the progress of the saint's knowledge or will have fully perfected them in wisdom and understanding.

After the reader hath weighed the proofs which I intend to bring in confirmation of my proposition, he is at liberty to judge whether they be valid or not. I am content that only what appears conclusive should be admitted. And if they dont find my reasons valid, nor my sentiments admissible, I shall not be offended. But if they think them convincing, and the sensible and pious judge my opinion worthy of their approbation, it will perhaps give me pleasure. But should what is advanced

contribute to make them love God with more ardour, and inspire my readers with more agreeable ideas of glory, I shall be very happy.

After these preliminaries, it is needful to propose my proposition, which is, that the knowledge of the blessed in heaven will be progressive.

I take the word knowledge in its widest latitude, I do not take it in the contracted sense of some philosophers, for the report which material objects bring to our senses. But in a general and unlimited sense, for all knowledge by whatever means or in whatever manner it may be acquired.

By an eternal progress, I mean an eternal increase; it will be always augmenting, and will never arrive at that degree of perfection, where it can be said: we can know no more; we can rise no higher in the scale of blessedness. This world is finite; its extent is limited and determined; the waves of the great deep have their bounds prescribed, which they cannot pass: *thus far shalt thou go, saith God, and no further*: there their fury is restrained: but human intelligence hath no bounds, but shall extend to infinity.

By a future state I mean, the condition of saints after death. There is another life after this. The soul does not perish on her separation from the body, she subsists in another life, and shall continue to augment her knowledge so long as she remains there. It is evident our light increases here, and I see no reason why it should not do the same in the next world. Here we proceed by degrees from the knowledge of things to their nature and use, and it seems impossible to deprive us of the desire to know: I cannot think that death will make so great a change in our faculties, that a thing hitherto naturally impossible, should not only become possible, but necessary and inevitable; nor do I see how it can be our knowledge, if it is perfect immediately after death.

By the blessed or saints, I mean those whom God shall judge worthy to be partakers of that inheritance, which
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is incorruptable and full of glory ; such who having done his commandments and complied with the Gospel covenant, have a right to the tree of life and shall enter in through the gates into the city.

PART II.

The perfections of God are infinite, his power has no bounds. He can do all things, and all things are the effects of his power. Nothing is impossible to him ; his bounty and goodness are equal to his power and wisdom, and extend to all that he hath made.

Though man shall receive great advantages on his introduction to the kingdom of heaven, yet he ceases not to be a finite creature : though he leaves this sad and miserable desert, he does not on that account become God, nor is he invested with divine perfections ; in heaven he remains a finite essence, and his power will be always limited. Great as his advantages may be, and though his knowledge should be ever so vast, yet he will for ever remain a creature, and his nature will continue unchangeably the same.

A finite creature can never comprehend a Creator who is infinite ; a nut-shell cannot contain our earthly globe, nor can the waters of the great deep be inclosed in a bottle. One cannot pass the hills into a thatched cot, nor enclose the mountains in a shepherd's cabin. There is no necessary proportion between the one and the other ; but there is infinitely less between the perfections of the Deity and the human understanding, there is no analogy of proportion between them ; but there is between created beings, though it be ever so small, having this in common, that all created beings are circumscribed and limited.

Though man cannot comprehend the excellency and perfections of God, he must know them or he could not be happy. There could be no desires, if there were no suitable objects for them, and to know and to possess, is that wherein their contentment and satisfaction will
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consist; and consequently the privation will constitute their misery and torment. Daily experience proves this. Man loves society; and consequently it is in society that he can find pleasure and repose, and in solitude weariness and disgust. Man's natural bent is to eat, to drink, and to rest; and it is the gratifying of the desire, which gives pleasure and contentment; as the privation produces trouble and misery.

Man desires to know God: it is natural for him to pass from the effect to the next cause, and from that to another, and so by order and by degrees till he arrive at God who is the first cause of all things, at which he stops, and in whom he finds satisfaction, there is the true centre and object of the study and knowledge of man: to which when we arrive we repose with sublime joy and infinite transport.

If the human mind is bounded it cannot instantly comprehend all the divine perfections, this must be done at sundry times and successively; but it is not safe to decide how far this knowledge may be extended. Six thousand men cannot pass at once through the gate of a city; but several millions may pass in small companies. All the waters of the ocean cannot pass the straits of *Gibraltar* in an hour; but it is certain they might all pass in time. There is no mathematician who can examine by the glance of an eye all the propositions of *Euclid* with their different demonstration, but many have done this successively taking one by one.

But the perfections of God are infinite, and can never be exhausted: as eternity cannot be measured, no more can one exhaust the perfections of God: whatsoever can be exhausted is finite; whatever human intelligence can penetrate is of a limited nature and perfection: God's nature is a fathomless abyss: and such are all his perfections. Through all eternity these will not be fully and perfectly explained, and after all our study we shall not fully understand them all.

They will furnish new subjects of meditation to all eternity; they will perpetually occupy our minds, and

present to them new objects of wonder and delight. There will be no want of either subjects or matter for this. This infinitely perfect and glorious object will through all eternity give new occupations to the happy soul. And since these virtues are inexhaustable, they will furnish the human mind with matter to study and meditate upon to all eternity.

All that shall be known of God in the life to come, will be either by the light of nature, or by a supernatural revelation. We shall know him by his superbly grand and glorious works. The brilliant objects with which the New Jerusalem shall be enriched, will publish the sublime perfections of their Creator, and all the blessed inhabitants shall sound his praises, discover his glory, and blaze with ineffable lustre on the eyes of all who receive admission. Perhaps there will be a supernatural revelation from the Almighty Father, which will give us clearer discoveries of both the things, and of the perfections of God, than these glorious works of which we have spoken.

The works which will give the blessed a discovery of the properties of God in the life to come; will be most sublime, and in great number; but we cannot decide or imagine to what extent their sublimity and number will go. The works of God with which we are here surrounded are very numerous, very grand and magnificent: and one cannot reasonably think that those in the world to come will either be less numerous or less glorious, seeing they are destined to display his glory in a more splendid manner. *There he shall be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that fear him.*

It is the property of the human soul to know, and to take pleasure in that knowledge. It is a truth verified by the experience of the greatest part, not to say all mankind. There are but few who are so sunk in sin and brutality, who have so far unmaned themselves as to take no pleasure in knowledge.

God directs the things in this world to answer the purpose for which they were made; and I doubt not but
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he will make those of the next life answer the same wise end. He made the sun to warm and enlighten the universe, and this purpose it answers. He hath made the earth to produce herbage for cattle and fruit for man, and this it answers to this day. The same may be said of all his works, they answer the purpose for which they were created.

The property of the human soul is not only to know, but to desire knowledge with quenchless avidity, and such a thirst is perfectly natural to the human mind. Hunger and thirst are not more natural to us in this life, than the desire of wisdom or knowledge is to our spirits, and it would be as difficult to divest ourselves of the one as of the other.

In paradise we shall not only have the same desire, but it will be more perfect, quick and ardent. Here it is very feeble, but this is through our fall by which our nature is much depraved, from which we shall never be so free here as in heaven, there our desire will be re-kindled and shall regain its primeval vivacity and ardour, there all the powers of the soul, hitherto languid and almost lost through sin and disease, shall obtain their first rectitude and shall never more be impaired.

This desire must be satisfied, otherwise heaven would be a place of torment and pain instead of a region of repose and consummate bliss. Strong desires unsatisfied would be an insupportable punishment, and perhaps this will be a great part of the torments of the damned. Whether this be so or not, I will not decide. but I am assured of this, what universal experience confirms, that to have desires, without the power of gratifying them is a most exquisite torment; such is hunger and thirst without food and drink.

Nothing is capable of giving satisfaction to these desires but what is proper to them. As intelligible objects gratify the desire of intelligence, visible objects that of sight, and sounds that of hearing, so one may readily conclude that the thirst of knowledge can only be satisfied with proper objects.

The mind of man is made for action: we know it is active here, and it is more than probable it will be active in the other world. It will have a superior kind of activity, when it is freed from gross matter. It is the opinion of some that the soul is never inactive here. When the body is inactive, the mind does not cease to act, as appears in dreams: and though we cannot remember, yet there is good reason to believe that we never sleep without dreaming.

An active essence without objects to exercise its faculties upon, would necessarily be a burden to itself. From hence it comes that even here inaction fills us with impatience, there is nothing more disgusting and insupportable to a man, than to have nothing to do.

New objects and new discoveries most agreeably touch our minds, and produce very suitable impressions; and why will they not do the same in the world to come? Those who read, meditate, and who study the nature of things, are ravished when they have made new discoveries. As there is no number so great but may receive an addition, neither is the number of beings so great, but infinite power can add others, yet shall their number be always finite; infinity is an incommunicable attribute of the deity, and a property peculiar to him alone.

If beings may increase to all eternity, what reason is there to doubt, but they will increase in knowledge as well as number? If one can receive the advantage of being multiplied, what should prevent the other from receiving the same advantage? Beings with their different properties and affections, are the objects of human intelligence; and man is more or less knowing, in proportion as the variety of the objects which he knows are great or small.

But as I propose to treat in the succeeding pages of the different objects, which shall be proposed to the meditation of the blessed in heaven, and of the probability or possibility of the eternal increase of our knowledge, I shall conclude these reflections referring the reader to what is there advanced.

PART III.

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Having spoken of the nature and perfections of God, of the nature of man, of his faculties, and of his inclinations, to prove or at least to render probable the doctrine already advanced, to make it more clear I shall pass to those reasons which arise from the objects which will be presented to our meditation in the realms of bliss.

The visible world is of such magnitude, that man is not capable of marking its grandeur. And who can say with any certainty, this is the just circumference of heaven's arch, and the boundries of our globe? Who can shew the diameter of the superb fabric, which presents itself to our eyes? Where is the Mathematician who hath measured its circumference? They have pretended to give us the circumference and diameter of the earth, the magnitude and distance of the planets, but none hath attempted to determine the vast extent of the universe.

The earth which we inhabit furnishes us with an almost infinite number of objects for meditation; yet in the judgments of the most celebrated Mathematicians, it is no more than a point when compared with the universe.

What a numerous variety of creatures walk the earth, swim the great deep, and wing the liquid air. What naturalist hath ever presumed to give us an exact description of the whole? We cannot count the different kinds of fowls, of beasts, of fish, of insects, of herbs, of flowers, of minerals, and an infinity of other things.

We cannot say what sorts of beings people the superior parts of this grand universe; but it is not improbable, there are inhabitants suitable to their nature and the difference of their climate. The superior parts of this admirable edifice, are infinitely more pure and majestic, than this vale of misery, and the gross atmosphere, with which we are surrounded; and perhaps those inhabitants are superior to those of this world, as the place of residence is superior to ours. This earth appears to be one of the smallest parts of the universe,

and perhaps she contains the least creatures which have proceeded from the hand of God.

It is not impossible but there are other worlds beside this which we know; some philosophers have spoken of an infinity of worlds, and have thought this idea suitable to the grandeur of God, whose power is infinite, and whose bounty is inexhaustible. I do not think it impossible but there may have been many others besides this. The scriptures assure us this world was created about five thousand, seven hundred years ago: but they are silent respecting the prior existence of other worlds; nor do they assure us, that God will never make any other, for it is of this creation only, which Moses speaks in the book of Genesis.

Those who have seriously reflected on the activity, the bounty and the fecundity of the divine nature, have found some difficulty in supposing that God produced no beings till within a few thousands of years; I may say within a few days, because with him a thousand years are as one day. In short can it be imagined that God hath had the design of producing beings, to make them eternal partakers of his felicity and glory, and yet did not bring them into existence, till within five or six days, for such are the years in his sight? This appears very improbable to a man of good sense.

It is not impossible but there may be other worlds after this is consumed by fire; but I do not take upon me to determine this point. It would argue much temerity and presumption to say, God shall go thus far, but no further; he will stop here, and put an end to his creative power.

There may have been other worlds already passed away, there may be other worlds now present, and it is possible worlds may yet rise out of the bowels of old chaos; containing an infinite number of beings of which we have no knowledge. If in the different countries in our world there are so many different creatures, can we reasonably conclude, that in such a number of worlds as appear in this universe there should not be a vast variety

riety of men? If there is such diversity and degrees of perfection among creatures of the same kind in this world, will there be less among men of the same species in the other parts of the creation. This diversity is so great, that while some approach to the perfection of angels, others are but little superior to brutes. The diversity which takes place between these two extremes is numberless. The same variety may be remarked among other beings. This variety, its different causes, and reasons, and the end of this difference will open an ample field for meditation.

There is no doubt but heaven will unfold to the saints a great number of wonders for their meditation. It is the palace of the great king, the house of God, the place where he makes his perfections shine with resplendent glory, and where he will signalize his love, his goodness, and his grace. Such a place is doubtless adorned with extreme magnificence, and enriched with the most grand and wonderful furniture to produce joy, extasy and admiration. Mediocrity is not seen in the courts of great kings, all is splendid, superb, magnificent, and suitable to their power and grandeur. Can it be thought that heaven will not be suitable to the august majesty of the deity, or that it will be less agreeable to his supreme grandeur, than the courts of earthly princes to their rank?

There is an infinite distance between God, and the most grand monarchs of this globe; there is no kind of proportion between the grandeur of the one and of the other. What proportion is there between the waters of the sea and the hollow of the hand? Or between the sand on the sea-shore and a nut-shell? Nevertheless there is some proportion between all finite beings; but there is none between God and the most noble and sublime of all his creatures. God is infinitely perfect, and the nature of his creatures is bounded and defective.

If we may judge of the glory of the celestial court by the sublime essence and perfections of God; and I do not see how we can judge otherwise, we may say that

his eclat and his magnificence will as far exceed the splendor of all earthly princes as his nature exceeds that of theirs. The celestial mansion built by his plastic hand, exceeds in grandeur and magnificence the most superb palaces of eastern princes, as much as his omniscience and omnipotence exceed the skill and power of a creature.

In the kingdom of God, at least after the resurrection, man will be composed of body and soul; and so exactly adjusted that it will contribute to the felicity of both. Then shall the body be spiritual and glorious. What his sensations and desires will be, I dare not take upon me to determine; neither the degrees nor the advantages received by the blessed in that change, which will take place in the great day of judgment: but all agree, and it is beyond doubt, that the one will be the rule and measure of the other, the change of the body will serve as a law, to speak so, for the change of the sensations and desires which will then obtain.

The blessed by possessing the divine palace shall receive the most glorious advantages. By this they will obtain more of the excellence and perfections of God, of his power, of his wisdom, of his bounty, of his love, of his tenderness, and the incomprehensible riches of his grace. It is in these, I conceive, the happiness of man will consist, that is to say, in the vision of God, which divines in general make to be his SOVEREIGN GOOD.

The glorified saints may quit the celestial Scenes voluntarily or by order to survey and examine the works of creation. We may represent to ourselves travellers, who pass from place to place to learn the manners and customs, the laws and constitutions by which different states are governed, and under which they live; as well as to inform themselves of all that is particular, rare, or worthy of being observed. I see no reason why the blessed may not pass from one part of the universe to another, and contemplate all that is curious and admirable. Who can imagine the prodigies of power, of wisdom

dom and of goodness which they will discover, and who can say how much of the perfections and glory of God these will display?

The Scriptures assure us, that the holy angels descend from heaven to earth to discharge the duties enjoined them by the most high. Though heaven is their country and their native abode, and for that reason they are called the angels of heaven; yet it does not prevent their making frequent visits to this earth. They are acquainted with the redemption of the world by the Saviour, the enmity that subsists between the seed of the woman and the serpent, they know and administer to the church of Jesus, and doubtless contribute, under God, to its progress. If then the angels know many things, which are transacted on the theatre of this world, why may not the blessed obtain like knowledge of other worlds and parts of the vast universe.

The heaven of heavens may not fully unfold all that may be known of God. Though they are the most august mirror in which the face of the deity is displayed, yet I am not certain that they fully manifest all that the blessed can comprehend of the great Father of all worlds. Other parts of the universe may develop things which could not be known in paradise. Not that God conceals them from the realms of bliss; but he chooses those creatures upon which he may impress his image and the marks of his perfections, to exhibit to the eyes and minds of reasonable creatures; as beings only capable of discerning and meditation.

All the works of creation display the perfections of God: the firmament unfolds the mighty power of his plastic hand, the sun, the moon, the stars, their nature, their regular motions, their influence, and their effects, are in effect so many mouths publishing his infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. There is no creature in heaven nor in earth, which does not exhibit less or more of the admirable perfections of their creator. If then this visible world and all its beings manifest the glory and attributes of the great God, can it be doubted that
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all which hath been, which is, or which shall be in the other worlds, will not speak the same language? God made all things for himself; that is to say, for the display of his glory and infinite perfections.

God does not need the aid of creatures to inform him of his own perfections; he needs neither this nor any other world to know himself and the extent of his power, his wisdom and his bounty. These attributes and all others found in him are his infinite essence and are perfectly known to him. His works cannot teach him.

A great part of the visible creation, in my opinion, is of small use, if not for the contemplation of reasonable beings. In a word to what purpose are the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the almost infinite variety of beings which exist, if there were no intelligent creatures to survey and meditate upon these wonders? Wherefore were they created? And why hath God engraved upon them his image and perfections, if there had not been intelligent natures to give attention? If this visible world was made as a mirror for the use of men and angels, therein to contemplate the glory of the all-wise creator, to what purpose serve the other worlds which were, or which are, or which shall be, if not for the same use? They shall be as mirrors, wherein the glorified saints may with rapture contemplate the glory of the Lord.

It is true during this life we profit but little by the principal end for which the world was made, because sin hath blinded our reason and enfeebled our mind. The principal end for which these things were made is to lead us to the knowledge of God; and they certainly unfold many grand characters of the divinity. But man is blind, slothful and negligent, and will not give attention, nor engage in these sublime pleasures, this spiritual commerce, and this deathless honour, nor even give himself time for reflection. But this only proves in my opinion, that there are other intelligent beings, who are contemplating the divinity in the great diversity of creatures here on earth. Though the world was principally

cipally created to give man the knowledge of the Creator, yet not for this only, since angels may see and contemplate the glory of God. And if this world was created in part that angels might therein contemplate the perfections of God, it is not improbable but the same world, and all the worlds that exist were made in part for the use and contemplation of the blessed.

I must acknowledge this world is useful to man; some few discover a God whose excellence and perfections are infinite, and the rest a very great majority might see, through divine assistance, the same things would they but apply themselves thereunto. The things of this life are good, as food and liquor, yet there are some who have ruined their constitutions so that neither the one nor the other can do them much good, the fault is not in the things but in the man; so it is with the visible creation some can discover nothing of God in them, while others ascend through the scale of beings up to God the first great cause of all.

What has been said under this head may be briefly summed up in this; that this world which we see and which we inhabit, is a vast extent containing a very grand number of different species of beings: that there may have been other worlds before this: and there may be others in succession to all eternity: that all God's works are so many heralds of his glory: that the principal end for which they were made could not be answered if there were no intelligent beings to consider and meditate upon them; that the angels see and contemplate the works of God in this sublunary sphere: that it is my opinion the consequence is not improbable that glorified saints may see and contemplate the glory of God which he hath displayed in this and in all other worlds; and that their variety may be nearly infinite and so numerous that they will furnish subjects for endless meditation, and knowledge which shall eternally increase.

PART IV.

There are various means of increasing knowledge. I shall reduce them to four. 1. By means of vision. 2. Com-

Communication. 3. By divine revelation. 4. By the aid of reason. To avoid mistakes, it must be observed I do not positively say that the saints will augment their knowledge in this fourfold manner, nor can I say there will be no other way of increasing knowledge. I only affirm that it is possible, yea even probable, they will augment it these four ways.

I understand by that knowledge which we gain by vision the Idea we form of visible things. This knowledge differs from what we obtain by a close examination of objects. The knowledge which I have of persons, of cities, of villages, and of countries which I have seen is not the same with that acquired by a close examination of a portrait, a statue or a map.

The knowledge which we have of the kingdom of heaven, and of the glorious person of our Saviour is very different from what the blessed and the angels have. They see and contemplate this glory, but we are far removed, and can form but very imperfect ideas of that bliss. We can only know it by the accounts given us, and the descriptions to be met with in the holy bible; but the blessed know it, because they see it.

There are but few things in this world which we can know by the help of sight, because our vision is bounded. We are shut up in a little corner of the universe, and can only see a small number of objects at once. Though we can move from place to place and examine many things successively, yet we cannot see many things at once; the sphere of our activity is circumscribed, we move slowly and with trouble. It costs us much pain to examine the few beings with which we are surrounded, what must it cost us then to make the tour of this globe?

The presence of the blessed will certainly be limited in the other world; they will be men in heaven as they are on earth, though spiritual and endowed with thousands of graces and virtues peculiar to spiritual bodies; but I am of opinion their movements will be prompt and quick as a ray of light or rapid as a thought: the
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body then being perfectly suited to the soul they will move the distance between this world and the remotest star in the twinkling of an eye, such I presume will be the agility and properties of glorified beings. They will not find so much difficulty in passing from one extreme of the universe to another, as we now find in passing from village to village. Some of the learned have thought that all those blazing stars which decorate the blue vault of heaven are habitable worlds, and are peopled like this on which we live. It is not possible either to prove or deny this doctrine, though I confess I am at a loss to account for such numbers of worlds being made purely for such ignorant beings as men to gaze on, reason would incline me to think infinite wisdom must destine them for a far nobler use: and as the private right of judgment belongs to every man, I must confess I think them inhabited.

As the blessed will have natures so active and which can move with such celerity; they can easily move from star to star, or rather from world to world and behold all that is done there, survey all that is worthy of contemplation, as well as in the upper realms of light: this will exalt their ideas of the grandeur of the deity, and retune their harps to his eternal praise. This world affords us some creatures, which swim the great deep, others which walk the earth, and some which wing the wide expanse, which if duly considered cannot fail to fill us with admiration and surprise, and at the same time exalt our notions of the great Creator, we may then reasonably suppose that worlds more pure and glorious than this must produce creatures still more grand and worthy of our admiration.

But no part of the universe will produce such sublime wonders and glories as the celestial court. It is there we shall behold the most grand and magnificent effects of the power, of the wisdom, and of the goodness of the great God. Who can measure the vast extent of this superb palace, and how great the variety of its inhabitants and furniture are? If the earth is but a point in comparison of the heavens, the heavens in comparison

of the empyreum, and the empyreum but a point in comparison to the heaven of heavens, then must this grand palace extend nearly infinite. And were there no worlds past, present or to come, heaven itself in this point of view would afford wonders sufficient for the contemplation of the saints to all eternity.

There may be different species of reasonable beings, of pure spirits exempt from matter. And among these of the same species different degrees. There may be angels with organised bodies nearly approaching those of ours at the resurrection. And among these many different kinds, all those shall be exposed to our eyes and be matter of meditation.

It is not for me to determine the number of beings prepared to embellish the new Jerusalem, the *city of the living God*: but as there are many things here, which display the perfections of God, some more and some less needful, at least many of them appear to be only as ornaments for this world, and to render it agreeable to our eyes; so it is probable there will be a vast variety of beings for the decoration of the house of God; and to render it agreeable to the eyes of all those who shall be judged worthy to dwell there.

But the most glorious object proposed to the eyes of the blessed will be our exalted Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. He who on earth the most despised of men, is now in heaven *the prince of the kings of the earth*: he who was once the butt of scorn, is now presented an object of admiration even to angels themselves: he who formerly stood a criminal at Pilate's bar, is constituted the judge of quick and dead, and all men shall appear before his judicial seat to be judged. Who can attempt to describe the character, the grandeur, the excellence and the perfections of the holy Jesus?

Jesus Christ is the most brilliant, the most lively image of God through the whole creation, he is exalted above all principalities and power, to him the angels are subject, he is God through the whole creation; he is exalted above all principalities and power, to him the angels

gels are subject, he is God over all blessed forevermore. His power, his wisdom, his bounty, his providence, his administration, his empire is infinitely more extended and perfect than can be well conceived by finite minds.

The blessed shall behold Jesus not only in his person, but in the mode of governing his kingdom. They will behold him the head of saints and angels, as captain general of all the celestial armies, as the most illustrious person who presides over them, who shall govern and direct them under the orders of the glorious FATHER, and shall shed on them the influence of his life. In a word though the scriptures assure us, that when man's redemption is fully completed, Jesus shall resign the Empire into the hands of the FATHER, nevertheless I conceive he will retain the honour and the quality of Saviour and Redeemer of men, and as the son is the great eye and soul of this grand globe, so shall the sun of righteousness shine upon and animate the heavenly Jerusalem, for the lamb is the light thereof. The blessed shall behold his light with inconceivable joy and pleasure. Such are the means of obtaining knowledge by vision.

PART V.

God formed man a reasonable creature, that he might know his maker, comprehend his will, and be capable of being governed, and consequently of being made happy; and this it appears he might have done without a written revelation. But man fell! and since that fatal event, God has made known his will to man by means of a revelation. By this Adam knew that *the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*; and perhaps many more things which are not recorded in the bible. By this Noah understood that the world must be drowned, and afterwards that it should no more perish by a deluge of waters. Abraham and the Patriarchs, Moses, the Prophets and the Apostles of Jesus Christ, were informed of many things by the same means.

Moses obtained the history of the creation either by immediate revelation, or by tradition from those to

whom it had been first revealed : for one may conclude from the visible world that it hath been created ; but we could not conclude that it hath been created in such a manner or in so small a time. We could never have known that when God created the heavens and the earth, that there was a formless deep or chaos, from whence he called them by his allcompelling *fiat* ; or that he proceeded in the manner laid down by Moses. It required a revelation to give us this knowledge. For there is nothing in the form of the heavens and earth, or any other creature that would determine us to think thus.

The police and government of the Jews, as well civil as religious, with many other things in that state was established by an immediate revelation from God. Their laws were made by God himself. Their government was a theocracy : God was the sovereign under whom they were to live. He informed them by the grand mean of inspiration of their duty as subjects of a republic and church, separated from all the nations of the earth to serve and adore him. Their laws and model of government were not the productions of reason ; but the effects of the sovereign will of God, in many things arbitrary, and which could only be known by revelation.

The church of Jesus is established in the same manner : her author and founder proceeded from the bosom of God the Father from whom she receives her laws and government : the laws which regard her constitution and discipline were instituted and settled by divine revelation.

It should seem that with respect to the *discipline* and *government* of the church of Christ, the scriptures are silent as touching any *positive* model : and *tradition* has no binding authority, so that we are left to model her as time and circumstance may determine. Angels know much of the will, nature and perfections of God by divine revelation. By this they knew the will of God respecting man's salvation ; and that grace which God would bestow on sinful man, the bounty and compassion he meant to confer on a ruined race. Had not
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God revealed these to the world, angels could not have known them. They could not have discovered them by the book of nature, nor by any other way than a revelation from God.

By paying attention to the nature of God and his works, it might be concluded that he was merciful; but without a revelation, it could never have been discovered that God would reconcile himself to sinful man. The will of God is a secret which neither men nor angels can know till it is revealed. The reconciliation of God with fallen man could never be known by the laws of nature, nor did the angels know this till it was revealed. If man in a state of innocence knew at least a part of the will of God by a supernatural revelation; and if after his fall God continued to make known his will in the same manner to the patriarchs, the prophets, and to the Apostles; if the angels obtain knowledge in the same way; I cannot see why, the blessed will not augment their knowledge in the same way and manner. I doubt not but the glorious works exhibited to the eyes of the saints, will discover to them a great part of the nature, will and perfections of God; yet I am not assured but there shall be a supernatural revelation in the realms of blest.

As divine revelation hath furnished us with the history of the generation of this world; it is not improbable but the blessed will obtain the geneological history of other worlds in the same way. In short though we know enough by the light of nature, that all creatures are the productions of the first being; yet by this we neither know when, nor how they were formed. As in this world both men and angels know by revelation the laws and politic government of the church of God; it is not impossible but the blessed will know in the same manner the laws and government of other worlds. They may obtain them as the angels have obtained those of this world.

St. Paul remarks the analogy between the first and second creation; in the first creation *God commanded light to shine out of darkness*, the same he does in the new crea-

tion, hath shined into your hearts, giving light to such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. As at the first creation darkness and chaos preceded the light, and good order and the arrangement of things; the same in the second, the state of ignorance and confusion, precedes the state of light and knowledge. The analogy, the resemblance and the proportions remarked by the divine penmen, between the natural and spiritual creations are not very numerous: but it is not improbable but the correspondence may be much greater, had we the full history of the first creation, and had the divine writers remarked them. What reason can be given why this grand analogy shall not be made known to the blessed by divine revelation?

The construction of the tabernacle and the great number of its vessels and instruments had certainly some signification. The epistle to the Hebrews puts this beyond doubt: and yet the scriptures hath given us an explication of but very few. Who can decisively say, what was signified by the *shew-bread*, the *chandelier* and its different lamps, the *cherubim* which covered the *shew-bread* with their wings? The new testament hath said some little by way of explication of some parts, and some authors have had the boldness to attempt a full explication: but what the bible is silent upon must remain doubtful. It is probable that the just and clear explication of these things is reserved for the other world; and that the blessed shall receive this knowledge by a particular revelation. There are moreover in the new testament many typical persons, things and actions, and I am confident that no man ever did nor ever shall know their full meaning in this world. The person of the high priest was doubtless typical, as were also many of his actions. The same may be said of many things in the sanctuary, the *vail* which encircled the *sanctum sanctorum* or holy of holies. David, Solomon and Isaiah were typical persons: the new testament hath spoken of their antitype, but what is said is very brief, obscure and imperfect. Perhaps a perfect knowledge will never be obtained till we come to the other world, when it will be made known to the blessed by the means of revelation.

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To these I would add many ceremonial laws which we read of in the books of Moses, of which it is difficult to give a reason for their institution, or to say what they signified. It may reasonably be supposed that the Jews for whom these laws were made knew their reason and sense much better then we can who are come into the world so long after, and to whom these laws are no way obligatory: nevertheless I am inclined to think the Jews themselves never perfectly knew the reasons and end of all their institutions.

Who knows the reason and signification of the different kinds of sacrifices; or what evidence have we that even the Jews understood them? Why were many of the sacrifices wholly consumed on the altar, while others were only part consumed? Why was one part of the offerings eaten by the priest, and the other by those who presented the oblation? In almost every age since the creation, God hath revealed the future at different times and for different reasons. On this ground he informed Abraham that his posterity should be slaves in a strange land for the space of four hundred years, and that in the end they should be delivered and should be prosperous. On the same account he told the Jews they should go into captivity into Babylon for the space of seventy years; that Cyrus should deliver them and reestablish them in their own country; and many other things of the like nature we read of in the bible. It is reasonable to suppose that saints and angels knew all these future events, because God hath revealed them; and I do not see why the blessed may not know many things in the heavenly Jerusalem by the same means, and that in an everlasting succession.

Who can say through all eternity God will never create any more worlds; or if created he will not govern them as he does this, partly by natural and partly by supernatural laws? I know nothing in the christian religion which contradicts this opinion. It is true she is silent upon the subject, nor do I affirm that it is either true or necessary; it is enough, if it is not repugnant thereunto. I do not say there will be a succession of worlds

worlds as corrupt as this, and consequently have need of a redeemer: but why may there not be a world, yea myriads of worlds, whose inhabitants might keep their primeval integrity and rectitude, and God govern them by natural and revealed laws; Adam was governed in this manner while he continued in a state of innocence; and after a limited time, I am inclined to think, would have been translated to more magnificent habitations where he would have enjoyed a more perfect beatitude.

Permit me to observe, that God may govern both saints and angels for ought we know, by natural laws. The services they render God in protecting kingdoms and his church in particular, or in punishing his enemies, may in my opinion, be that obedience which they render to his positive and particular commands or express revelations. For although rewards and punishments are annexed to the laws of nature, yet they neither determine the time nor degree. Where is the law of nature which determines when and how far the enemies of God and his people ought to be punished or chastised? Where is the law of nature which prescribes the time when nations and churches shall be protected or delivered into the power of their oppressors and those who seek their ruin? It appears to me that these things depend upon the will of God; nor can they be known but by an immediate revelation. If in these particulars angels are subject to the laws of revelation, who can say that in all other cases they shall not to all eternity be governed by the same? Who can say that the worship and praise of God in heaven will not be determined by positive and immediate revelation? And who can determine the number and variety of these institutions, or how long they will continue, or how often they will be renewed?

If Adam in his state of innocence was subject to the laws of nature and revelation; who can doubt that saints and angels are not under the same, or that the inhabitants of other worlds do not receive from God these twofold laws for their government and regulation; and if their knowledge is natural and supernatural why should

should not that of the blessed in heaven? The sum of what has been said is, that the knowledge of the blessed will eternally increase by the means of revelation. I have given my reasons as they presented themselves to my mind. The reader is at liberty to receive or reject them.

PART VI.

It is very certain that in heaven the blessed and angels will communicate their thoughts one to another. Man was made for society, and to converse seems essential to him. We may reasonably make the same judgment concerning angels. They as well as men are intelligent beings, and to converse seems inseparable from their nature. They are social beings, and social converse seems the inseparable property of all intelligent creatures. How they will communicate their thoughts, is not known to me, nor perhaps to any man in the world. To say how this shall be done, we ought to know the nature of spirits; whether they have bodies or not, and of what nature these bodies are: but no man in his senses will attempt these things. It follows then by an infallible consequence, that no man knows how saints and angels carry on this mutual commerce. When we are ignorant of the nature of things we must also be ignorant of the effects they will produce. But though we may be ignorant of the nature of things, yet we may be sure that they are. We know not how a grain becomes a tree, or a small seed of one uniform colour produces a flower of such different contexture and such variety of hues. We know not how brutes and fish are formed, nor how a fowl is produced from a simple egg, and yet it is certain that they exist. If then beings really exist of whose formation we can give but little account; I see no reason why we should doubt the existence of a reciprocal communication of thoughts between saints and angels. It is certain that there are an infinity of things above our conception. It would argue much rashness and incredulity to deny that beings preternatural had appeared to men and at times conversed with them; but who can say how they rendered themselves visible, whether they assumed bodies of air or some other element;

element; or by condensing their own bodies, or by some other way made themselves visible and audible? These are questions to which the most knowing can give no satisfactory answer.

Suppose then the saints and angels to hold converse in heaven, and reciprocally communicate their thoughts; I maintain that the knowledge of the blessed will be much augmented by this mean. For if there are, or if there have been other worlds besides this in which we live, the saints will obtain information thereof from the angels who have governed them, and who by an express order from God have taken knowledge of their affairs. There is no doubt but God hath a particular care of all his works, about which his ever watchful providence is concerned. And I think it is evident that God makes use of the ministry of holy angels in the government of other worlds, as well as of this. By this means the glorified saints will obtain the knowledge of beings which exist in other worlds, of what use they are or have been, their virtues and their perfections, above all what reasonable creatures inhabit there; and also what was the government and what laws God prescribed to which they were subjected and how they obeyed. To this may be added many other things, as how long they existed, by what means and by what causes they were preserved, what recompense and what punishment they received and in what place. They will also become acquainted with all the grand events which have taken place in other worlds, their causes and occasions; as also the laws there observed, and the governments there established, and how many species of reasonable creatures, and how they were employed: for a reasonable being requires something whereon to exercise its faculties, either by action or meditation, or by both; otherwise their faculties were useless, and were given them in vain; which we cannot easily imagine, because such conduct is beneath a wise and prudent man, but how much more unworthy of God to create reasonable beings for no end.

It is not possible to tell what vast knowledge the blessed will acquire in this way: for should they descend

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to minute details, their knowledge must be nearly infinite. If there have been many worlds before this or actually coexistent with it, what an infinity of subjects for conversation will not these afford for the angels or other intelligences, who have had a knowledge of what has there taken place? What part of eternity will they not employ in these sort of relations? If by what we see here and the remarks we make, we are able to judge in some manner of the pleasures which the things in the other world will give our minds, and the manner in which they are constituted, may we not say that things of this nature will extremely charm us, not only as simple histories, but also as circumstances and proofs of the power, of the wisdom and of the infinite goodness of God: not as simple relations of such and such events, but as effects of an infinite puissance, of a wisdom that is admirable and incomprehensible, and of the immense bounty of the creator of all things?

In this manner shall the saints comprehend all that has passed in this world since the creation. I think it is certain that the angels will give them an ample relation of all that passed before the flood; how and by what degrees the inhabitants corrupted themselves in turning from God and in abandoning themselves to sensuality and prophaness. What Moses has only given us a very concise account of shall be fully made known with all its circumstances. Many things which we could not know, because of so much ignorance and obscurity, the angels shall fully eclaircise.

The saints shall contribute to the increase of the knowledge of the blessed. Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch and Noah, have been well informed of many things which passed from the creation to the deluge; they must have added greatly to their knowledge having been already some thousands of years in glory: they will doubtless communicate their knowledge to such as newly arrive in those blest regions, and their narrations will be very copious.

The angels will unfold the history of the world from the deluge to Abraham; they will discover how the earth

earth was peopled by the posterity of Noah; and how the tower of Babel came to be built, of the confusion of tongues, of their dispersion over the whole earth. I doubt not but the angels will convey a clear and circumstantial account of all these things to the saints: in the society of glorified souls we shall have a clear and perfect intelligence of all things of which we at present understand nearly nothing. Noah lived many years after the flood, and consequently knew much of the affairs of the world, and will doubtless communicate his knowledge to the saints in glory.

It is certain that the blessed will obtain the history of the church of God, which hath subsisted in all ages, by the recital which the angels and saints shall give them: they will be informed how she suffered under her enemies, and how often she has changed her exterior and name in the eyes of mankind, and how often she has been nearly destroyed, how she rose from the dust and obscurity, and again flourished in the world. They will discover to the saints the miracles which God wrought for her deliverance. In the first ages of christianity God raised and increased his church by the simple preaching of his word, the instruments were poor, weak, and universally despised. But the church was planted meagre all the opposition, of the wise, the learned, the powerful and the politic masters of this world; the means by which the world thought to have ruined the church were by the overruling providence of God made to advance her. They persecuted all who bore the name of Christ; they striped them of their wealth, friends, liberties, and of their dignities; they massacred them by thousands; they invented the most cruel, slow, and painful punishments that earth or hell could imagine: but all these could not destroy the church of God; *the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church*; the more they tore to pieces, the more they multiplied.

As God founded the christian religion by means which human reason would have condemned; he has also reformed her from corruption at sundry times by means
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seemingly as improbable. After having groaned for ages under the tyranny of the papal yoke, subjected for a long time to thick darkness and hellish ignorance, nearly habituated to superstition and idolatry, exacted by penal laws, to whom the grandees of this world gave energy by the civil arm; Luther appeared, a poor monk who by his single voice shook thrones, yea all Europe and made the infallible chair of Peter tremble to its base: thousands forsook the whore of Babylon, refusing to buy her wares any more; but uniting in a more rational worship of God, and approaching much nearer the simplicity of the gospel. This human reason could never have planned nor thought it practicable. The holy scriptures, and histories both ancient and modern furnish us with relations of these things. The scriptures speak briefly of the foundation of christianity and the manner in which it was established. Ancient history gives us some account of the propagation and increase of the christian faith; and of the obstacles it had to surmount. Modern authors furnish us with the rise and progress of the reformation; but I doubt not the saints and angels will furnish us with more ample and more perfect relations of these matters. Who can say how much they know of these particulars? doubtless their knowledge of these things is most exact. Heaven is destined for the exaltation and the celebration of the praises of the great Jehovah. We cannot celebrate what we do not know, the more perfect our knowledge of any thing is, the better we shall be qualified to praise it as it deserves. Those are the most proper to admire, to praise, and to adore the perfections of God, who know his wonderful works in the fullest extent and in the most perfect manner. None can praise an author but such as have read his works, and who best know his talents. None can sound the praises of God, but such whose knowledge of his providence and works is the most perfect and extensive.

The blessed will no doubt magnify the power, the wisdom, the justice and the goodness which God hath displayed in founding, protecting and governing his church. There has been a perpetual war between
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the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent; where often the scale of victory has hung doubtful till in the end like their illustrious master they have bravely conquered by their fall like Sampson. As the saints will discourse upon the different conflicts which have taken place between the two kingdoms, of the battles which have been fought under the respective generals; I doubt not but they will entertain each other with the invisible wars which have been waged by Michael and his angels in favour of the church, against the dragon and his angels to the prejudice of God's people. Who can tell how far the knowledge of these things will extend? If the least circumstances shall not be omitted, which appears they shall not, the number will be near-infinity. How many ages may be employed in communicating this vast knowledge?

Nations, churches, and particular families will furnish an infinite number of things. We can say but little of them now, because we have little or no knowledge of their affairs. We know neither the good actions they have performed, nor the sins they have committed. We are not well informed of their qualities nor the temptations to which they have been exposed, and consequently cannot be informed of their adventures. But in the other world we shall receive a full information of the whole, then shall we easily comprehend the whole. The affairs of the world and those of the church are so interwoven that we can scarcely know one without the other. The conquests or sufferings of the church cannot be unfolded without bringing to light the malicious designs and practices of the world. We cannot describe the triumphant conquests she hath gained over judaism and paganism, without mentioning the furious opposition made on the part of the Jews and Pagans. Nor can we develop the affairs, progress and conquests of the true church over the Roman synagogue without entering into a tragic scene of bloody actions.

As the world is a theatre, and the changes and revolutions which take place are the scenes of this tragedy-comedy, if we may speak so, angels and glorified saints are
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the spectators, and after the grand close of all things here will give God due praise, and consequently will have a perfect knowledge of all that has passed. For it is certain that no one can extol the wisdom, justice, power and goodness of God in the management of all these affairs, without having a full and perfect knowledge of the whole.

It must not be thought that eternity will pass away in useless conversation. Such thought is blasphemy. The converse of the blessed will not be useless and uninteresting, it will touch the speakers in the most lively manner, and will produce in the hearers effects worthy of their nature. These histories on the one hand will produce wonder and surprise, and on the other will make us love God with a more ardent flame; and the result will be joy, pleasure and divine contentment: the whole will conspire to the praise and the glory of his sublime perfections and infinite goodness. The minds of the blessed shall be so attentive and collected, that every time mention is made of the works of divine providence, impressions will be produced agreeable to God, and advantageous to their own felicity.

It is certain that such conversations are worthy of the glorified souls, and answer perfectly well to that state of glory to which they are exalted, possessing an estate happy and sublime, what can they do more grand and glorious, than entertain each other with the wonderful power, wisdom and goodness of him who placed them there, and by these means to excite love, gratitude and praise? Nothing is more worthy of reasonable beings in like circumstances, and under similar obligations: nor can any thing be more worthy of God, or more suitable to intelligent beings. We see the royal prophet often making mention of the works of God, and the admirable effects of his providence with regard to Israel. He makes mention of the covenant which God made with Abraham, of the captivity of the *Hebrews* in Egypt and their miraculous deliverance. He mentions their rebellions in the wilderness, the punishments with which they were visited, their superficial repentance, and the

feigned sincerity with which *they approached God with their lips, while their hearts were far from him.* Why does he mention these things? to display in brighter colours the tenderness, the favor and the mercy of God to the Jews, and his inviolable attachment to his covenant. God had sworn to Abraham to give the land of Canaan to his posterity, and he would not break his oath, notwithstanding the rebellions of an ungrateful people. I think it is evident then that the blessed will entertain each other in heaven with the works and the providence of God to retune their harps and inflame their minds. If it is the duty of pious people in this world to praise God, can it be less the duty of the blessed in heaven? And if in this life piety and devotion is exacted in speaking of the works of the most high, will not the same thing be done in the other? If on earth it is an agreeable duty, will it cease to be such in the realms of light? If in this vale of tears our obligations to gratitude increase in proportion to the blessings received; it consequently follows that the blessed must glow with gratitude, and sound the ceaseless praises of the glorious author of all their mercies, since they have received and are receiving infinitely more than the most exalted person in this world.

I could say much more to shew that the knowledge of the saints shall have an eternal increase by the means of tradition. For instance, I could speak of the kingdom of darkness, her government, laws, constitution, pains, &c. which the damned feel, for doubtless all this is known to the angels and will consequently be revealed to the saints: but perhaps the reader already thinks me too long.

PART VII.

To reason is to infer one thing from another, or from known premises to infer such or such consequences. The faculty of reason will be in use in the other world. In considering what God is, in recollecting what he has done, and in knowing what he is actually doing; the saints will conclude on sure ground that he is worthy of their

their love and obedience. When they consider that he is the first great cause he has given being to all creatures, and to man breath and life; when they represent to themselves that they were made in the image of God, that they were ruined by sin, that he sent his son into the world to redeem them from their iniquities, to renew and sanctify them; and to re-impress them with his image; when they reflect that their being, their faculties were given them for the production of their bliss through the medium of agreeable objects, they will necessarily conclude that God who is so great, so incomprehensibly good, is truly worthy of all possible esteem, love and adoration.

If the intelligence of the saints were infinite, there would be no place for reason: but as it is certainly limited, it is not easy to see how the human mind can be divested of so essential a property. Could they love God without knowing his perfections? Could they obey him while ignorant of his just authority, and the many and great benefits they have received from his hand? And is not this knowledge, this love, and this obedience an effect of reason?

It is certain that a great many arts and sciences in use among men will have no place in heaven, but will terminate on earth; I cannot say this is strictly true of all: for it is certain that *theology* will not only find a place in heaven, but will be considerably perfected. There we shall know the will of God better than it has ever been known here; and our faculties shall be more capable of this knowledge than they have been in this world. Heaven will furnish us with the perfections of God, with demonstrations more lively and sensible than any we have here. It is true creation, providence, and the scriptures, have given us a great knowledge of God; nevertheless heaven will give us much more; *for here we see but darkly, as through a glass; but there we shall see face to face.* Here we behold God *imperfectly*, but there we shall see him as he is. As then we shall know more clearly and perfectly, we shall be more capable of putting in practice what we know. Who can imagine what

will be the depth and riches of the divinity and glorified saints? What length of time it would require to exhaust it? And after millions of ages it will still remain inexhaustible.

The mystery of the Trinity and the personal union will furnish us with matter for eternal meditation, and so profound is this mystery, that perhaps the saints will never comprehend it fully. It is at present too vast for our minds, and will probably be so to all eternity. We should not readily subscribe to this great mystery, were not the scriptures very explicit on the subject. It is an object of our faith and not of our reason; it is revealed, and on that authority we receive it, perhaps it will be the same through all eternity.

The perfections of the human nature of our blessed Saviour are doubtless of vast extent, and through the wide universe there is no essence, except the triune deity which equals, much less surpasses it. The lustre of his body, and his different perfections will be extremely penetrating, but the faculties and perfections of his soul will be infinitely more admirable and surprising. What should hinder the saints to know by the way of reasoning these things as well as others of which we have spoken? Why from the knowledge they have of things which are clear, may they not infer consequences of things which are less clear? Why may they not proceed from causes to effects and from effects to causes.

In this manner we proceed here. From the stately fabric of the heavens and earth and the different creatures, we conclude there is a first cause, a power, a wisdom, and a bounty which are infinite; from the knowledge we have of God that he is immaterial, we infer that he is incorruptible; and as we understand that he is spiritual, we conclude that he is simple and many other things of the same nature. Can it be supposed the saints will not proceed thus? If they preserve their reason, which they doubtless will, why will they not preserve its use? If it is not incompatible with the felicity of the saints to preserve the prerogatives of reason, what should hinder them the using it? It is probable
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there will be the most lively images of the Trinity and of the hypostatic union, such as shall place this grand mystery in full light, and render the consequence easy and clear, as a cause from an effect or a copy of an original. We see such images in this world. The soul, for instance, has three principles which compose its essence, yet it is but one soul. The soul and the body is but one man. It is probable that there will be the most striking images of this hypostatic union: and though we may never obtain a perfect knowledge of this grand mystery, so much will be obtained as is necessary for our satisfaction and repose.

At present it seems impossible for us to reconcile the prescience of God with man's free-will; but perhaps this difficulty will be obviated in the realms of light. The difficulty of reconciling these two arises hence, we neither know the nature of God nor of man, nor the influence of either upon human actions. If we know what God is, and what man is, and the manner in which both the one and the other operate in the productions and effects which are attributed to man, a great part, not to say the whole of this insuperable difficulty would instantly disappear. It is indubitable that the saints will have a grand knowledge, and will draw consequences which will easily reconcile these difficulties.

The power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God are infinite; an unbeginning, neverending, overflowing ocean without bottom or shore. His power is almighty. God does what he will. Nothing can stand before his potent arm, when he will work who shall hinder? his wisdom is impenetrable, a vast abyss whose depth no mortal has ever fathomed. His goodness is boundless, who can say here it shall stop? Such and such sins are beyond its reach it cannot pardon them? It swells infinitely greater than the earth, is as deep as the gates of hell, and wide as the poles of heaven, what an infinite number of conclusions may be derived from such pleasing subjects.

From this knowledge of the nature and perfection of God, the Saints will be able to judge how God acts upon
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the mind of man. It appears from scripture and experience confirms the same, that God acts by his spirit on the mind of man here; and he will doubtless do the same in heaven; but how this will be done we cannot say. God is a *pure act* of an infinite presence, without any accident properly so called. If the perfections of God constitute his essence, it is out of the power of man to determine the manner of God's acting on the human mind; but if the essence of God is a *pure act*, how is it that God is always equal and always in action, how can he act so differently upon such a multitude of spirits, and so often on the same? How are the operations of God to be conceived, if they are nothing but his essence always acting? It is natural to conclude the saints will obtain this knowledge by the mean of reasoning. It is allowed that God can create. To create I understand the production of a being from nothing. This is a power which surpasses all our intelligence, but the power and fecundity of God will be so well understood in the other world that we shall easily and clearly conceive how God created this vast fabric out of nothing,

The resurrection is a doctrine which we believe on the authority of God in his holy word. But how dry bones and scattered dust can revive; how bodies devoured by rapacious animals, fowls of the air, and monsters of the great deep, or reduced to ashes and cast into the sea can re-assemble and become a habitation for the soul, is what we cannot conceive. But the blessed knowing the power of God, and the different subordinate causes, can as easily conclude how this was done, as we on beholding a ruinous house or village can conclude how it is to be rebuilt.

The production and preservation of our being, what gives us life and motion, is what we are ignorant of: this is universally allowed: for the creature does not become independent where it begins to exist. It depends on God both for the present and future. It hath need of the succours of the deity both when it is produced and when it produces. But what this divine operation is we know not. But I am inclined to think
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the saints will both search and discover this grand mystery.

It is certain the human mind was made to know God, who is known by his works. It is not certain that all the different virtues and perfections of these works are equally clear; some are more evident, others more obscure and difficult to comprehend. It is so in this life, and it may be the same in the next. Here we discover, by the aid of reason, things unknown by the means of things already known. I do not see why saints may not do the same in bliss. Heaven will be far from diminishing, much less abolishing the laudible inclinations of the human mind, on the contrary they shall be augmented and rendered more perfect. The desire of knowing by the aid of reason seems natural to the human mind: with submission, I suppose that the kingdom of heaven will augment and perfect the faculty and inclination which we have for reasoning; so far from destroying, it will render its use and exercise more easy, more agreeable, and more happy. A finite intelligence cannot know all things at once; this knowledge must be acquired by degrees. Can we suppose that a reasonable creature is to act from the same principles as a brute? Is he to serve and adore God without the use of his reason? Can he serve, love, and obey him without paying attention to his excellence, his bounty, his power, and without regarding him as the cause and foundation of our worship? I know not what others may think, but I am decidedly of opinion, that all the obedience we render to God, all the love we have for him is an effect of our reason, and consequently reason will be necessary in heaven to augment our knowledge and also to produce love and obedience.

I have already supposed a plurality of worlds for the everlasting increase of the knowledge of glorified souls; things so probable that they have strong appearance of truth. I honestly confess I cannot think that from all eternity God has only created this visible world, whose birth Moses and other inspired writers have left us the history of, and whose duration is not six thousand years,
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Though I would not be understood that a plurality of worlds is necessary for this increase of knowledge, heaven is a vast and glorious place, and may in every sense be adequate to this glorious end. As I have advanced this doctrine, that the knowledge and felicity of the saints shall always augment: I am also of opinion that both shall receive a vast addition on our introduction to the realms of pure light and uninterrupted bliss; our faculties shall be more grand, refined and perfect, and consequently more capable of reasoning. They shall with greater ease infer conclusions from premises than in this state of sin and blindness; and on that account shall extremely augment their knowledge. I cannot say to what length this shall be extended, but presume that eternity only shall set bounds thereunto.

To what has been already said by this thinking Frenchman I beg leave to add the following reflections on this truly sublime subject:

The Apostle observes that, *we are come unto mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels: to the general assembly and church of the first born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the perfect spirits of just men: and to Jesus the Mediator, &c.*—Doubtless the intent of this sublime passage is to impress our minds with ideas of that bliss which will result from *society*. A society perfected in wisdom and consummated in bliss; where no clouds of ignorance pervade the mind, no disorder the passions, nor any imperfection the souls of these happy intelligences, to interrupt their joy or impair their felicity. We are assured both from scripture and experience that *God is Love*. That all the displays of his perfections, whether in erecting worlds, angels, men; in governing, directing, and providing for the same; in blessing, punishing or destroying them; or in succouring, redeeming and glorifying the same; are but the different modulations of his unbeginning never ending and all comprising *Love*.

The religion prescribed to man whether under the Heathen, Jewish, or Christian dispensations, never was nor can be any thing but love: this celestial goddess is
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the true daughter of the sublime and happy God of love. She would reign over earth's tumultuous sons, would they but listen to the music of her heavenly voice; she stretches her peaceful wand over the world, but they spurn her gentle sway: she is clothed with innocence, meekness, gentleness and truth; while righteousness and mercy are the moveless basis on which her evershining throne stands firm and secure. But hell gave birth to, and a description of man called *Divines*, *Cardinals*, and *Popes*, have conjured up a motley fiend of horrid aspect: she is clad with ignorance as with a garment: and like a pseudo-prophet proclaims herself the true descendant of the skies and lawful daughter of God, while her rapacious talons grasp the *civil sword*, and like a true daughter of the bottomless pit strews her way with blood and slaughter; heaps of smoking carnage marks the footstep of this religion, while she has in her chariot, *racks*, *wheels*, *chains*, *excommunications*, *Creeds* and *uniformity*, with more than stoic hardness inflicting her sanguinary edicts on all who dare oppose her antichristian schemes: her arguments for such conduct are *orthodoxy* and *divine right*. As if a father having twenty children, and one of them a blood-thirsty wretch should obtain his father's mandate for murdering all the rest. Or, as if that gentle Jesus who wept over Jerusalem who bled on the cross, and who even in his last agony prayed for his murderers, should be now well pleased to see his friends slaughtered, because they durst not sin against him, and they loved him with a love stronger than death!! But blessed be God there are a few on earth who are so far enlightened as to see that all pure and genuine religion is love: that God who is a spirit must be worshiped in spirit; and that no worship but what is the effect of divine love can be pleasing to a God, whose nature and whose name is love. But if this heavenly goddess (love) has but a few votaries on earth; yet she has millions on the plains of light: there she maintains her sovereign sway over the infinitely wide extended realms of felicity. There millions of ravished beings from the sublime Cherubim, the mighty archangel and the glorious thrones, down to the lowest order of that heavenly throng: from

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Adam, the venerable patriarchs, the awful prophets, and the truly illustrious heralds of the gospel, down to the infant of a day: the millions of millions gaze with rapture on her blaze of light, and bask in the allanimating allwarming and all beatifying rays of bliss.

Does love constitute conjugal bliss on earth? The parties shall love with a much purer, much brighter and infinitely more lasting flame in the new Jerusalem. Does love constitute parental and filial bliss? The hearts of parents and children shall feel much stronger emotions of love in the fields of light. Is friendship rare on earth, and is it insincere if love be wanting? It is in the garden of heaven that this sacred plant of true friendship unmolested grows: there friends shall clasp each other, and in mutual acts of love be more closely united and grow eternally together in the regions of true repose. Is love the true cement and happiness of civil society? Never yet found on earth, but in heaven nothing else is known, O what a region of bliss, consummate bliss. In a word is true religion nothing but love? This is evident from the first model of a christian church given us at Jerusalem: alas how few understand it in this light, but looking upon a dull round of religious duties as the sum of pure devotion, whereas all is vain without love: in heaven all is love. With submission I speak it, the warmest flame of love that ever glowed in the breast of the most passionate lover, in the heart of Jacob for his Rachael, or in the breast of David for his Jonathan, will be infinitely exceeded in the realms of glory both towards God and towards each other:

O my soul what transporting views open to thy sight, what ravishing scenes are exhibited on the fields of heaven, what jubilant throngs are tuning their harps in honour of the great redeemer. Hark their music, behold their lustre, see how they beckon thee away, mark how they lean from their shining thrones, to solicit thy arrival. Lo! they stand on the frontiers of heaven waiting to welcome thee home, and to place the crown on thy triumphant brows, and to conduct thee to the lofty throne of God: O may I safely gain that bright abode. Amen.

MILES MARTINDALE.

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